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An Essay on Scrofula.

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The Complexion is in general fair & the Colour of the hair either reddish or of some other light tint; People with dark complexions, & black hair being much less subject to Scrofulous Complaints. The Cheeks are in general, florid & the Tunica Albuginea often of a dead white, & more pale than usual. The edges of the eyelids are frequently affected with a degree of tenderness which easily degenerates into a troublesome inflammation, that distresses the patient by its continuance, & produces a disagreeable degree of deformity. There is frequently, too, a Swelling of the upper lip, with some thickning of the Nostrils & point of the Nose. Independently of these particulars, Scrofulous people are often comely & handsome, & rather distinguished for acuteness of understanding, & precocity of genius.
The distinctness & prominence of those different Symptoms depends upon the extent of the predisposition to Scrofula; as they are more

The prevalence of Scrofula is a public Calamity, from the insidious tendency of the disease to undermine the health & strength of the unfortunate victims, & to break out unexpectedly from exposure to various occasional causes, which would not affect persons of untainted constitutions.

Unfortunately it is a disease of frequent occurrence in this Country, appearing under various forms, & in different degrees of Severity; from a State of Milaness which hardly betrays any perceptible external Symptoms, to a State of Violence which produces the most miserable objects of human wretchedness; & wherever it Mingles with any accidental or local Complaint, it makes all the Symptoms worse & More difficult to cure.

Every part of the body is liable to Suffer from attacks of Scrofula. It has indeed a tendency to attack some parts in preference

to others; but this predilection is common to all diseases attended with local affections, & affords no special objection to the universality of Scrofula, which from every circumstance known with regard ~~with regard~~ to its history, appears evidently to be a disease of the whole Constitution.

Scrofula is one of those diseases esteemed hereditary on account of its promness to descend from parents to children; the tainted constitution of a single parent being sufficient to communicate the disease to the common offspring of a Marriage.

From this facility of propagation it spreads very extensively over a country; & the tainted families can often pitch upon the progenitor who first introduced the Scrofulous constitution.

Symptoms & Appearance of Scrofula.

The Scrofulous constitution is marked by Symptoms which characterize it in a most evident manner.

or less evident, according to the degree of Contamination in the constitution of the individual.

Scrofulous people, though active & alert for the time, are seldom robust, or able to endure great fatigue without having their flesh much wasted, & their Strength much exhausted; but Once they begin to recover from this Sudden falling off of flesh & Strength, they have a rapid Convalescence & quickly regain their former plumpness & vigour.

One of the most frequent Symptoms of Scrofula is Swelling in the Superficial lymphatic glands, especiaeley in those of the Neck. These glands Swell without any previous complaint & often attain a large size before the Swelling attracts Notice. The Swellings are frequently unaccompanied with pain or discolouration. Which favours the conclusion that the inflammation if it exist at all, is slow, inactive, & that

upon the whole, the complaint is of an indolent nature.

The frequency & often universality of such swellings in the lymphatic glands, has induced many practitioners to suppose a Scrofula to depend entirely upon a morbid affection of the lymphatic system; though I question much whether this information be supported by an accurate & extensive induction of facts; for many other parts of the body, which show little of a glandular structure are often the primitive seat of Scrofula.

It very frequently attacks the joints of the extremities, the bones, & the mucous membrane, without any previous or concomitant affection of the lymphatic system.

Scrofulous swellings of the glands are often stationary, or at least very slow in their progress of increase or diminution. I have however known exceptions to this general rule

in several cases, in which the affected glands have enlarged suddenly & subsided again in the course of twenty-four hours, without any obvious cause for so rapid a change.
The same indolence & absence of inflammatory symptoms which characterize scrofulous swellings of the lymphatic glands, likewise distinguish similar affections in other parts of the body. The commencement of the attack is in general unperceived & the progress, though the tumefaction which follows frequently very considerable.

The greater number of scrofulous affections are accompanied with a preternatural swelling of the parts attacked. These swellings are principally of two kinds, which though very dissimilar in their appearance, are equally characteristic of scrofula. One is remarkable for its softness; the other is more of a firm gelatinous consistance; & neither of them are

in common cases, attended with any perceptible inflammation.

Soft Scrofulous tumours are always formed by the effusion of a fluid; & it may be remarked that they are somewhat variable in their size, being one day more prominent, & tense, the next more sunk & flaccid. This variation, however, is not constant, & is seldom considerable, & must always depend upon the occasional absorption, & deposition of part of the fluid which the tumour contains. In a few cases indeed the fluid is completely absorbed, so that nothing remains but an empty cyst, which when it is deeply seated, & of considerable thickness, may mislead the judgement of the inexperienced.

The quantity of the matter which such tumours contain, likewise undergoes a change from the circumstances in which it is placed. From stagnation & other causes it is in part decomposed, when the more solid parts are deposited in the form of

little masses resembling coagulated milk. The remaining portion of the fluid is thus rendered thinner & then resembles whey. To this is added a quantity of purulent matter. The admixture of this matter gives a different appearance to the contents of the tumour, which now more resembles those of a common abscess. The resemblance is the greater the longer time the complaint has subsisted. The contents however never require precisely the same properties with healthy purulent matter, being always thinner, more transparent & more of a greenish tint.

However humble the tendency to ulceration may be, the skin, at last ulcerates, through the whole thickness of its substance, & allows the matter to escape at a narrow opening. After the evacuation of the matter, the tumour subsides, but the parts having in general a little disposition to heal, form in general a

running Scrofulous sore, which continues open for an indefinite length of time. Such is the ordinary course, & termination of soft Scrofulous tumours. They are commonly termed - Lupi; & occur very often in persons of a Scrofulous Constitution.

The bones of Scrofulous persons also partake of the general disease in the constitution, they seem to contain a smaller proportion of animal earth & a larger of gelatinous matter, than what consist with the composition of a healthy bone; & on this account they are exceedingly susceptible of morbid action. The diseases to which they are most liable are general & partial enlargement, inflammation, suppuration, exfoliation & - partial death. They are also easily fractured, & this facility of fracture is much increased, - especially in long bones, by the deficiency of solid substance, for the cylindrical shell is unnaturally thin & therefore mechanically weak

So that the bones break upon the application of an inconsiderable force.

Scrofulous complaints, when no particular circumstance determines the time of their commencement, in general become troublesome in Spring, & get better towards Summer. In this way a patient will go on for years, having swelled glands & running sores at certain seasons, & getting quite well of them at others, till at last the ulcers & swelled glands either heal up & subside permanently, or produce a distressing of symptoms which ultimately put an end to the patients life.

Prognosis.

The degree of danger which attends Scrofula depends so much upon the particular part of the body which is the seat of the disease, & upon the whole severity of the individual attack, that I cannot venture to lay down any precise prognosis in a general view of the disease. The course of Scrofulous complaints, varies somewhat

according to the difference of their local Situations. Those which are situated nearer to the Center of circulation are more rapid in their progress, & heal more easily than those which are more remote; the most distant being always the most tedious & most difficult to manage; & both from this circumstance & the disadvantageous position in the ordinary attitudes of the body, Scrofulous affections of the lower extremities are the worst & most intractible.

So far however is universally true, that ~~chronic~~ Scrofulous sores, accompanied with fever, are always, to a certain degree dangerous, as the fever for the most part degenerates into a hectic, which preys silently, upon the patients Constitution.

The quickness of pulse & hectic feverish State, I think is sometimes the effect of mere weakness; in which case it is relieved by rest & nourishing diet & goes off gradually as the patient acquires

strength. But when the hectic flourishings — proceeds from any permanent disease in the System, it commonly proves fatal. The patient, however it is said by some of the best writers, never dies from the effect of hectic fever, untill he is afected with periodic — exacerbations, which terminate in profuse Colliquative sweats, & the Scrofulous Symptoms must be seen of great extent & long continuance, before they produce so dangerous effects.

Proximate Cause & Nature of Scrofula.

So little satisfactory is known with regard ~~to fatal in~~ to the proximate cause of — Scrofula, that I choose to decline entering upon any formal discussion of the question. Wiseman indeed supposes the proximate cause to consist in the presence of a peculiar acid which pervades the whole System. He does not however assume any regular argument in

favour of the theory; for less was he pretend to ascertain the fact by any chemical analysis of the circulating fluids. This theory therefore I think is a mere hypothesis, unsupported by proof, & unworthy of particular notice.

Occasional Causes.

Although the nature of Scrofula is involved in great obscurity, there are certain occasional causes which appear to exert considerable influence in bringing the disease into action. These are particular degrees of cold, especially when conjoined with moisture, irregularity of diet, meager & unwholesome provisions, an impure or tainted atmosphere generated in crowded manufactories, hospitals & schools, deficient clothing, external injuries, fevers, mercurial fictions, want of exercise, filth, fatigue, mental anxiety, &c. Of all these causes a cold, damp atmosphere & variable climate is the most powerful in inducing the disease; & next to

this, perhaps, derangement of the digestive organs, from improper, & particular Modes of living). It is well known that Mr. Abernethy, within the last few years, has endeavoured to show by a variety of illustrations, that a great Many local diseases derive their origin from disorder of the digestive functions. The same train of reasoning has been applied by other writers to the explination of Scrofula & as it appears to me with considerable Success. This finishes all the observations which I had to offer upon the Remote & occasional Causes of Scrofula. They are intimately Connected with the Method of cure which I propose to recommend, for as Scrofula is very much a disease of predisposition, excited by exposure to Occasional Causes, the principals of cure are to correct the Scrofulous tendency in the Constitution, & to prevent the occasional causes.

Method of Cure.

The treatment of Scrofula naturally divides itself into two periods.
The first is that in which, without any local sore, or other marked symptoms of the complaint, there is evidence of a scrofulous predisposition prevailing in the system. The other is that in which some local sore, or scrofulous symptoms, which requires appropriate management, that may either concur with the general treatment of the constitution, or interfere with what has actually taken place.
As scrofula is induced, or at least very much promoted by the flow operation of a number of circumstances, which produces a general change in the constitution, there is much reason to expect benefit from placing the patient in a totally different situation of circumstances. If for instance the continuation of improper diet tends to favour the appearance of scrofula, the amelioration

of it will naturally counteract this tendency. A similar advantage will also be derived from substituting the respiration of pure salubrious air in lieu of what is tainted, & unwholesome; & in like manner every arrangement conducive to health will contribute to correct the disposition of Scrofula; for a system of management founded on these principles, acts in direct opposition to the remote & occasional causes of the disease, & will therefore avert, & cure the attack, provided the taint be not too deeply implanted in the constitution, nor the disease too far advanced in its progress.

Of the various articles of regimen which demand attention in the management of Scrofulous patients, the article diet is one of the most important. The languor & debility which prevails in Scrofula, —

Naturally indicates, the use of simple, nutritious digestible food, taken in such a quantity as the stomach can bear, without being overloaded. A nutritious diet is supposed to include a reasonable allowance of animal food. The exercise of persons who are studious to ward off an attack, of Scrofula, ought to be regular, moderate, & long continued, sufficient to dispose them to rest but short of inducing that degree of fatigue which would excite a temporary, fever or permanently impair the strength. — Cold bathing especially sea bathing is a remedy universally employed in Scrofula & I think with great advantage in many cases; for it not only appears to improve the general health & strength, but likewise to promote the detumescence of enlarged glands, & the restoration of indolent swellings in the joints, even after they had attained a considerable

Size & had existed for some time. But in order that cold bathing may be practised with advantage, the constitution must have vigour to sustain the shock of immersion without inconvenience. If the immersion be succeeded by a general glow over the surface of the body, & the patient feels comfortable, & has a keen appetite, we may conclude that it agrees with him; but if he shivers on coming out of the water continues chilled, & becomes drowsy, we may be assured that the practice of cold bathing does no good, & had better be omitted. The warm bath is said also to be efficacious. One great advantage of this bath is to relieve a certain dryness of the skin which accompanies scrofulous emaciations & weakness, & occasions much oppression, & distress.

But little will these immersions avail

without dislodging those foul accumulations with which the alimentary canal is oppressed. For this purpose a draught of salt water is prescribed almost indiscriminately to every person who is advised to use sea bathing. It acts as a purgative, & proves a serviceable Medicine so far as purging is indicated in the case under Management. The waters of the sea however is not near so potable as the solutions of many of the neutral salts, & its Medicinal virtues do not appear to be superior. It is therefore prescribed rather from ~~fear~~ accidental convenience, than from any well grounded preference over various other Medicines of the same class. In cases of long continued costiveness, there is often a prodigious accumulation of feces, so that a great quantity has to be expelled before the stools become natural; yet

Notwithstanding this very copious evacuation which would exhaust a person in health, the patients acquires plumpness, & strength, under the course of purgative medicines. But Calomel is by far the most celebrated of all the purgatives which have ever been employed in the cure of Scrofula; & it is undoubtedly a very serviceable remedy in many stages of the disease. In order however, to enjoy the beneficial operations of Calomel with safety, we must be careful to avoid giving it in so large a quantity as to produce the proper specific effects of Mercury in their full extent; for a rash & lasting Mercurial impression on the system, aggravates every symptom of Scrofula.

The truth of this position is amply confirmed by the unanimous testimony of all practitioners, who have been

obliged to employ some course of Mercury for the cure of venereal complaints in persons of Scrofulous Constitutions.

Calomel, however, when given cautiously in Moderate doses, so as to act Merely as an alterative, or gentle purgative, agrees well with Scrofulous complaints. —

Like other preparations of Mercury, it communicates a gentle Stimulus to the system, & contributes more than any other Medicine to disperse tumors, & resolve indurations of a Scrofulous Nature.

Tonics. — —

Whatever may be the Nature of the operation of purgative Medicines, they certainly do not act directly as Corroborants. Nor do they directly invigorate the Constitution. For this purpose, it is necessary to resort to the use of Medicines endowed with other virtues, & which are supposed to

impart strength to the body. To what extent this object can be accomplished is a matter of some uncertainty; although a numerous class of medicines, under the name of tonics are employed to fulfill these indications.

The sensible qualities of vegetables are bitterness & astringency in various degrees & properties. Peruvian bark, or ~~cinchona~~ cinchona is the most esteemed & is very universally employed in cases of Scrofula. It is unnecessary to make any additional remarks on the virtues of other vegetable tonics, after having selected Cinchona as an instance of the most powerful.

Of the mineral tonics iron & Sulphuric acid are the most valuable for their virtue in the cure of this disease.

The preparations of iron are numerous; but the carbonate of iron, the muriatic solution

& the Chalybeate waters, are the preparations most generally employed, & are upon the whole I think the most unexceptionable. It is said to be the most efficacious when given in doses four or five times a day. The Sulphuric Acid is a favourite medicine with ~~all~~ most practitioners, it is palatable, grateful to the Stomach, & agrees with all forms & stages of Scrofula.

Specifics for Scrofula.

It would be an endless task to enumerate all the different Specifics, which the Credulity of practitioners has dignified with imputed powers. I shall therefore confine my Observations to a few of the most celebrated of Modern times. Dr. Stork of Vienna celebrated the Specific virtues of cicuta (the Conium Maculatum of Linnæus) in the most extravagent terms of commendation. It was universally employed all over Europe

upon the recommendation of this respectable Practitioner; So that a fair estimate of the Medicinal virtues of Cicuta, in the Cure of Scrofula May be Made from the result of very general & extensive experience. Cicuta it is said required to be employed to its fullest extent which the Constitution can bear with impunity, in order to enjoy the full benefit of its Curative powers. The limits of its dose therefore, is to be Measured by its effects in producing vertigo or Nausea, that is the incipient Symptoms of these last Mentioned diseases which disturb the functions of the head & Stomach.

Muriates of Barytes & of Lime. —

Of the former I Shall Say little, Not only because its virtues are always of doubtful existence, & its immediate effects upon the Constitution extremely unsafe; but likewise because

the use of it has been entirely supplanted by the introduction of the Muriate of Lime, a preparation of nearly similar chemical composition, & which has already attained a much higher degree of reputation. The Muriate of Lime according to the ~~celebrated~~ opinion of the celebrated ~~of~~ Doct. Black, forms the basis of Doct. Woods white drop.

Muriate of Lime in order to produce the maximum of effect requires to be given in much larger doses, than what practitioners have usually been accustomed to prescribe. One of the most successful imputed cures which have come, to my knowledge, was said to have been accomplished under a course of Muriate of lime, consisting of an ounce of the saturated solution taken three times a day & continued for many weeks.

Local treatment of Particular Symptoms.
All Scrofulous Cases which come under the Management of a Surgeon, are attended with external local Symptoms, which are objects of the Most important Considerations in the Management of the Cure. The continuance of these local Complaints May even be of Sufficient importance to effect the patients general health, & to afford the leading indications for the Management of the Constitution; So that in the Course of the diet, & other articles of Regimen, it is frequently More important to regulate the Management of the Case according to the State of the local Symptoms, than according to the Circumstances of the patients general health. In such cases the local Symptoms become the great dictator of practice & May demand either a More abstemious or a More liberal

diet than what would otherwise be requisite.
When the failure of the healing process arises from any radical fault in the Constitution, the accident may be unavoidable; nevertheless, the attempt ought always to be made, in performing operations on Scrofulous patients, in order to relieve them as much as possible from this adventitious danger. The establishment of a drain in form of an issue has been said by some Physicians to prove salutary, as a prophylactic in Scrofulous sores; possibly, the same end may be attained, even to a better purpose, by promoting a more copious evacuation of the bowels.
Scrofulous complaints in general do not agree with stimulant applications. In the treatment of Scrofulous sores under the ordinary circumstances of the complaint the simplest & mildest dressings answer best.

Preparations of lead are upon the whole very convenient & useful applications, provided the Solutions be used in a state of sufficient dilution to prevent irritation.

Upon the same principle, some simple ointment, such as yellow lard or cerate furnishes the best dressings in ordinary cases.

Extract applications, so far as my experience goes is very efficacious in resolving & disengaging Scrofulous swellings. Of these the best are Saturine applications, or Solutions of Muriate Ammonia, Mercurial ointment & other remedies of this class. Of late Iodine has been highly extolled, & it is said not without efficacy; it is to be applied in the form of a Cataplasm.

When the interposition of Surgery is necessary to accelerate & complete the cure, the object of art is to lay open the tumors,

the whole of their length in order to promote their Consolidation from the bottom.

Some Practitioners prefer opening these tumours by the introduction of a Seaton with a view of promoting the more speedy adhesion of the surface of the Cyst, & thereby procuring a total obliteration of the Cavity. The presence of the Seaton is supposed to support a degree of irritation which contributes to this end.

It only now remains to consider the expediency of removing the diseased parts by an operation. When the Scrofulous affection is circumscribed & incurable & accompanied with so much irritation as to prove a perpetual source of distress, which excites general disturbance in the constitution & threatens life with immediate danger, I think an Operation is then the only remedy which affords the smallest prospect of relief.

There is Nothing in the general Nature of Scrofula to impose a prohibition against the Removal of the diseased Parts. The Symptomatic enlargement of the Lymphatic glands, which lie nearer to the neck, than the disease, — presents no solid ground of objection; for this enlargement proceeds from irritation, More than from the absorption of Morbid Matter; & the glands often subside, — whenever the original Cause of their — enlargement is removed: at worst they — Only remain Stationary without — increasing in Size, or proceeding to — Suppurate & form bad Sores.

I hope I may now be permitted to Say a few words, with regard to the plan & execution of this immaterial dissertation; in particular with regard to what may by Some be supposed to be an omission. It May possibly have been expected, that

It may possibly have been expected that I should consider the Scrofulous affections of the different organs of the body: affections for instance of the testicles, of the Mammae, of the bones, of the region of the parotid gland, &c which form a very numerous & important class of diseases & which certainly merit a very full investigation. Of all this I was fully aware, but I found that the discussion of so many subjects, of so great magnitude, would open a field very extensive, indeed, I might almost say, of boundless inquiry; for as Scrofula attacks all parts of the body indiscriminately, the diseases of every organ would have been included within this range.

From these circumstances, I have relinquished all idea of comprehending an account of the Scrofulous affections of the different organs within the

Plan of this thesis, contenting myself at present with giving a view of the nature & treatment of Scrofula in its more general form & reserving for the subject of future & more particular discussion, any observations which I may hereafter have to offer — On the more interesting Scrofulous affections of particular Organs.

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